## National Foster Care Month 2023



Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families.

## A Tale of Two Sisters



After receiving a call late one afternoon from their foster care agency, the Blevins family accepted placement of a 12-year-old female, "A", who was removed from the home of her quardians. Her sister had been hospitalized due to the abuse and was placed with a relative. Placing the children together was not an option due to their individual needs and trauma. After placement, the Blevins got "A" connected with individual therapy and support, but additional testing revealed she was neurodivergent. A few months of hard work later, the Blevins accepted placement of "A's" sister, "L", and the even harder work began. Both girls were referred to Enhanced Foster Care services with the support of the family's foster care agency, OKDHS team, and service providers.

Services for the girls have been robust, dynamic, and effective. Through an ongoing collaboration with Enhanced Foster Care, the team has been able to share information, including new disclosures of abuse,

pivot treatment to address the most prominent needs, and truly create an individualized plan of care for both "A" and "L". Services have included intensive in-home stabilization services, trauma-informed individual therapy, as well as sibling therapy and family therapy, occupational therapy, coordination for 504/IEP services, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits, and 24/7 crisis response services. Through these services and a lot of commitment and hard work, "A" and "L" have accomplished so much in a relatively short period of time. This collaboration enabled the girls to reinstate contact with "A" and "L's" biological mother, who they had not seen or spoken to in more than 10 years. It has also significantly reduced incidents of verbal and physical aggression, empowered both girls to safely share their stories while mending and growing their sibling relationship, and provided a path toward healing. Enhanced Foster Care truly ensured that the mental health and wellbeing of these children remained at the forefront of the team's goals and informed decisionmaking at all levels, while providing invaluable support to the foster family caring for the children. In doing so, both girls are learning to thrive in an environment free from abuse and neglect and have been given an opportunity to move forward with new relationships, healthy boundaries, and a strong set of skills that will last a lifetime.



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